CHATTER CHATTER
WELL, THAT'S HOW IT SHOULD BE.
THE SCHOOL HAS BEEN VERY QUIET SINCE SUMMER VACATION STARTED.
SUDDENLY IT'S BECOME LIVELY HERE.
IS THE HOLIDAY OVER ALREADY?
THE TEACHERS ARE HAVING A MEETING RIGHT NOW.
TA-DA
!!
MY NAME IS MAKI. I LIVE INSIDE THIS FRAME.
MOVE

CLICK
CLACK
THEY'RE TALKING ABOUT A 4TH GRADE STUDENT THAT'S GONE MISSING.
THERE'S A POSSIBILITY THAT THEY WERE KIDNAPPED.
AH, MR SKELETON FROM THE BIOLOGY LAB. IS IT ALRIGHT FOR YOU TO COME HERE?
SHOCK
IT'S FINE. NOBODY SAW ME WHEN I CAME HERE.
AS YOU CAN SEE, I'M NOT HUMAN.
HUMANS NOWADAYS ARE CRUELER THAN US.
THIS IS A STORY THAT HAPPENED 10 YEARS AGO, AT SUMMER CAMP...
SPIRITED AWAY?
BUT... THAT KID COULD HAVE BEEN 'SPIRITED AWAY'.

AUGUST - SPIRITED AWAY

SUMMER VACATION IS NEARLY OVER.
BUT I DON'T EVEN HAVE A TOPIC YET.
5th Grade Book Report
NAH, I WANT TO TAKE A WALK.
I'M STILL THINKING ABOUT THE RESEARCH PROJECT.
ETSUKO, LET'S PLAY A GAME.
HM ...

DON'T GET LOST.
BE CAREFUL, OK?
SO I'LL SEE YOU LATER.
SO YOU CAN'T JUST PICK ANY TOPIC.
NOT TO MENTION THAT IT'LL BE COUNTED ON MY SCHOOL REPORT.
OH RIGHT, LAST YEAR YOU WON AN AWARD FOR YOUR RESEARCH PROJECT.
MY MOM SAID THAT
HUH...
OOPS, I'VE WANDERED OFF THE ROAD.
MY TOPIC LAST YEAR WAS 'THE CITY'S HISTORY'...
SOMETHING LIKE 'A BUG'S LIFE' ISN'T ANY GOOD...
IT HAS TO BE SOMETHING THAT'S DIFFERENT FROM THE OTHERS

WHAT FLOWER IS THIS? I'VE NEVER SEEN IT BEFORE.
HEY, DON'T TOUCH THAT!
Y-YES SIR ...
GO HOME NOW, KID!
YOU ARE A SUMMER CAMP STUDENT RIGHT? CAN'T YOU SEE WHAT'S WRITTEN THERE?
HUH?
HUH, IT'S JUST A PLANT. WHY MAKE SUCH A FUSS ABOUT IT?
PROTECTED AREA
PROTECTED FOREST PLANTS
PLEASE KEEP OUT
THERE MUST BE LOTS OF RARE PLANTS BEHIND THAT FENCE.
IT'S DECIDED!

MY TOPIC IS 'A PLANT'S LIFE'.
WALKING
THE NEXT DAY
LOOK AROUND
THERE'S NOBODY ABOUT.
THIS IS MY CHANCE!
MOVE SLOWLY
WOW...
RUSTLE RUSTLE

AND SO SHE STARTED PICKING THEM.
THESE ARE ALL PLANTS THAT I'VE NEVER SEEN BEFORE!
AWESOME!

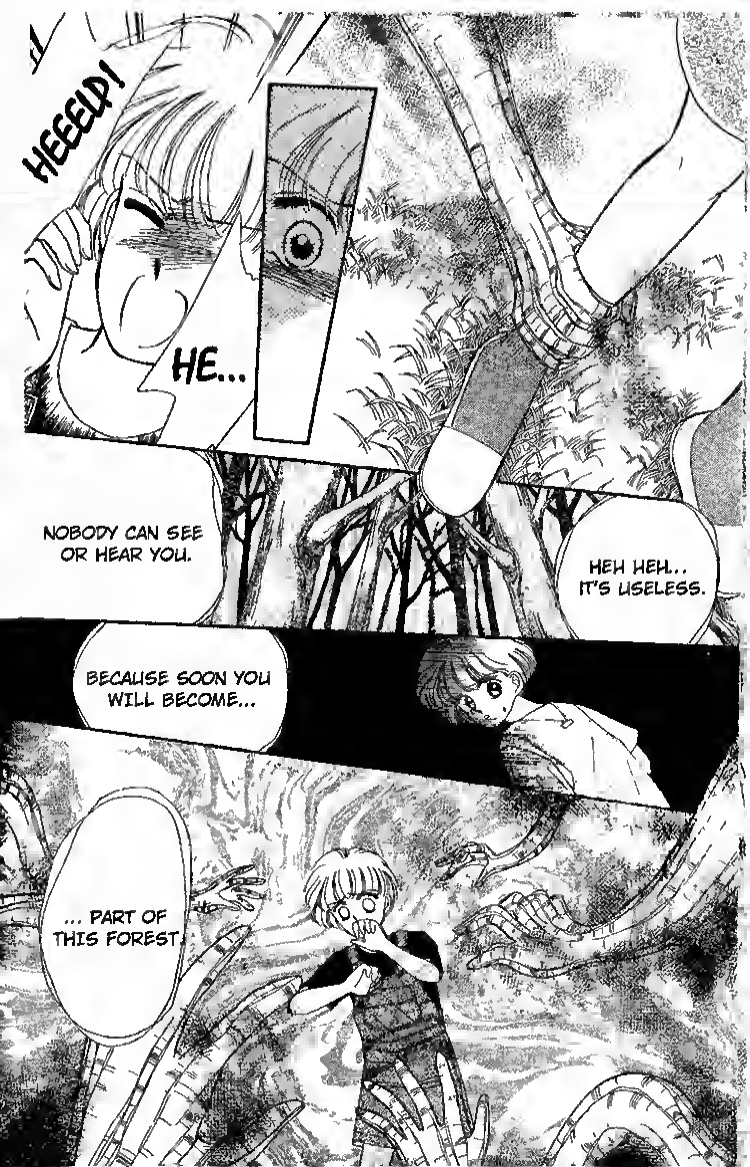
HA HA, IT'S JUST MY IMAGINATION
I FELT SOMEONE STARING AT ME JUST NOW...
WAIT...
WHY'S IT SO QUIET HERE? I CAN'T HEAR ANY CICADAS AT ALL ...
IT FEELS LIKE I'M THE ONLY LIVING THING HERE...
RUSTLE
TIME TO LEAVE!

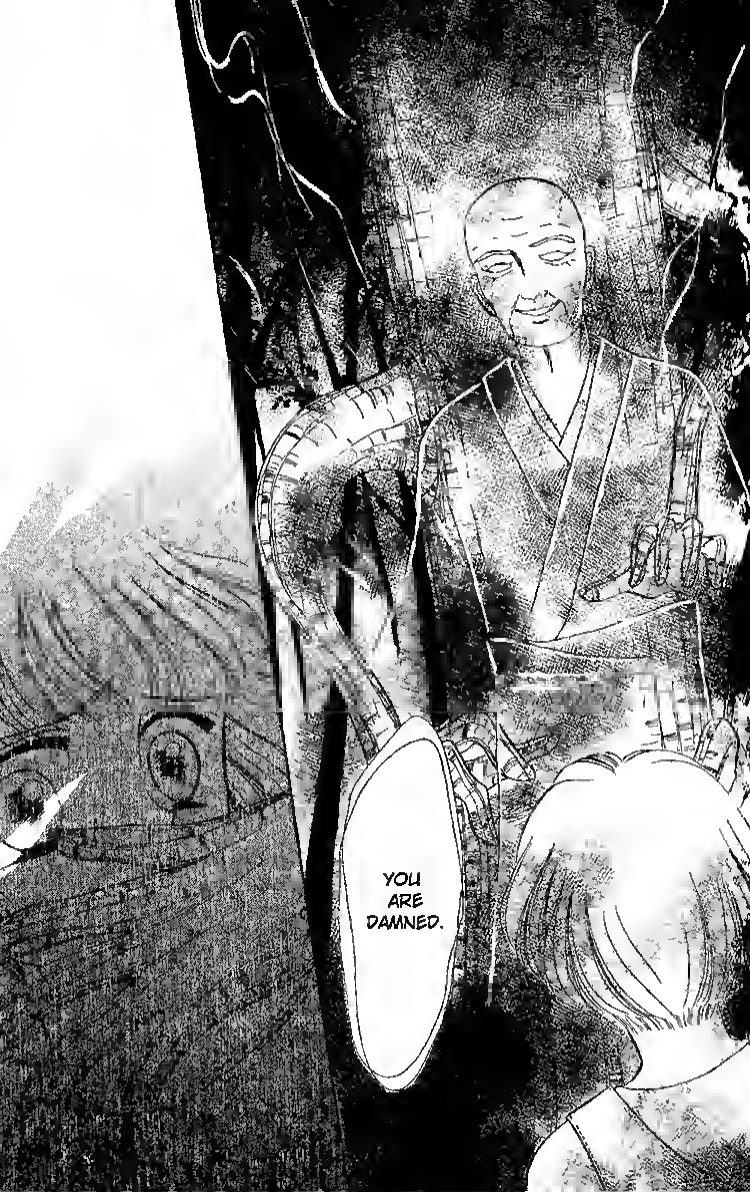
WAIT, WHICH WAY DID I COME FROM?!
RUNNING
NO...
NOOOOO...!
PANT
PANT
PANT

I NEVER THOUGHT I'D GET LOST LIKE THIS!
I CAN'T FIND MY WAY OUT!
WHAT SHOULD I DO NOW?
A PAIR OF SHOES? WHY ARE THEY HERE?
THEY LOOK BATTERED.

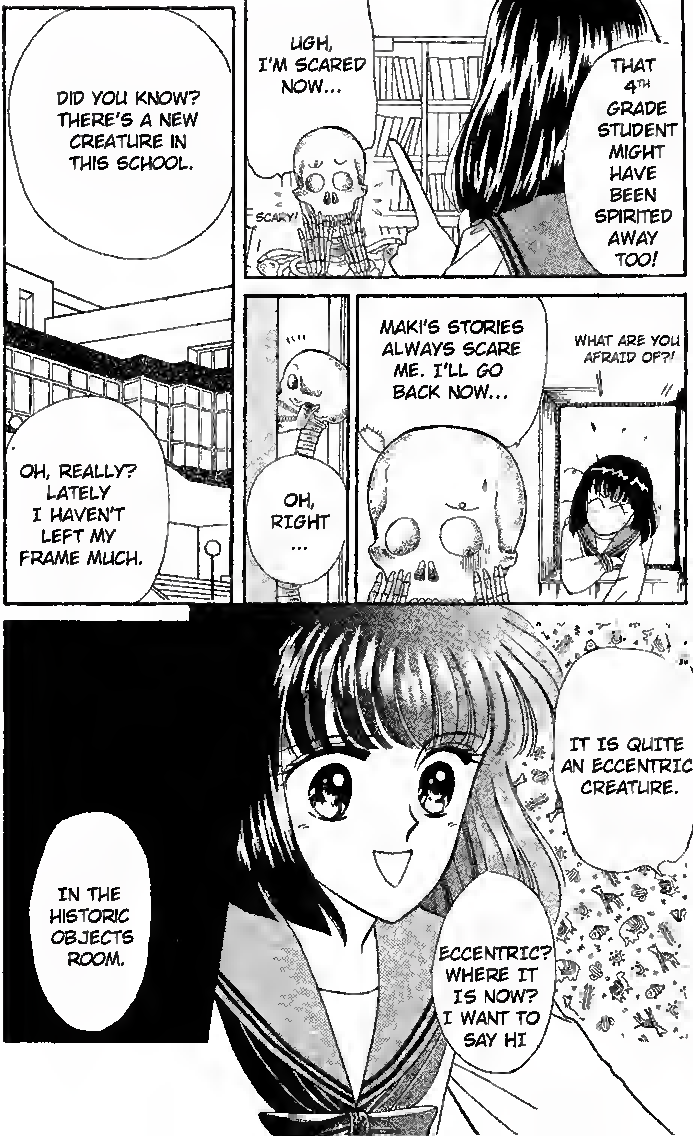
FALL
....
A HUMAN...? NO... THAT'S IMPOSSIBLE!
WHA... WHAT IS THIS?!
I HAVE TO GET OUT OF HERE!
PANT PANT PANT
HEEY!

I'M HERE!
ETSUKOOO!
ETSUKO, WHERE ARE YOU?
THEY'RE LOOKING FOR ME!
IT'S SENSEI'S VOICE!
SENSEI, I'M RIGHT HERE!!
...
...LOOKS LIKE SHE ISN'T HERE.
WAAAAIT!
STOP
RUSTLE
I'M HE-

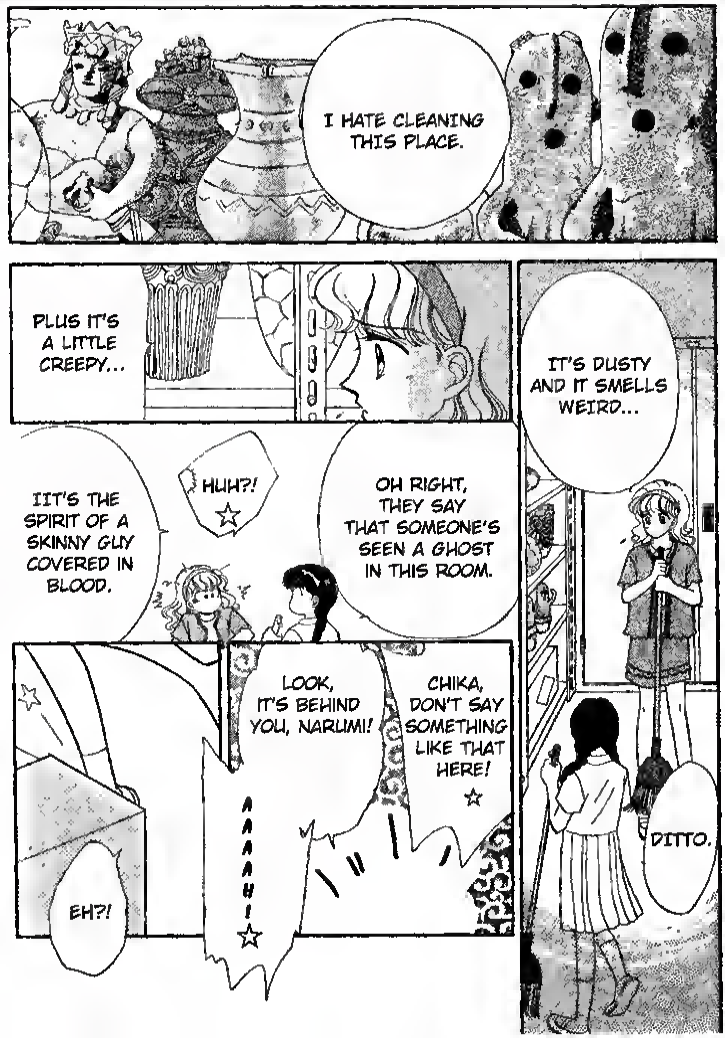

HEEELP!
HE...
NOBODY CAN SEE OR HEAR YOU.
HEH HEH... IT'S USELESS.
BECAUSE SOON YOU WILL BECOME...
... PART OF THIS FOREST.


YOU ARE DAMNED.

AFTERWARDS, IT WAS DISCOVERED THAT A LOT OF PEOPLE HAD GONE MISSING IN THAT FOREST.
THE NEXT DAY, THEY FOUND ETSUKO'S SHOES.
WHEN SOMEONE DISAPPEARS WITHOUT AN EXPLANATION, PEOPLE USUALLY SAY THAT THEY'VE BEEN 'SPIRITED AWAY'.
BUT THEY NEVER FOUND ANYTHING ELSE.
IF YOU VISIT SOMEWHERE LIKE THAT FOREST ON YOUR OWN, YOU MAY BE SPIRITED AWAY AS WELL!


DID YOU KNOW? THERE'S A NEW CREATURE IN THIS SCHOOL.
OH, REALLY? LATELY I HAVEN'T LEFT MY FRAME MUCH.
IN THE HISTORIC OBJECTS ROOM.
UGH, I'M SCARED NOW...
SCARY!
THAT 4TH GRADE STUDENT MIGHT HAVE BEEN SPIRITED AWAY TOO!
....
OH, RIGHT ...
MAKI'S STORIES ALWAYS SCARE ME. I'LL GO BACK NOW...
WHAT ARE YOU AFRAID OF?!
ECCENTRIC? WHERE IT IS NOW? I WANT TO SAY HI
IT IS QUITE AN ECCENTRIC CREATURE.

SEPTEMBER - STONE

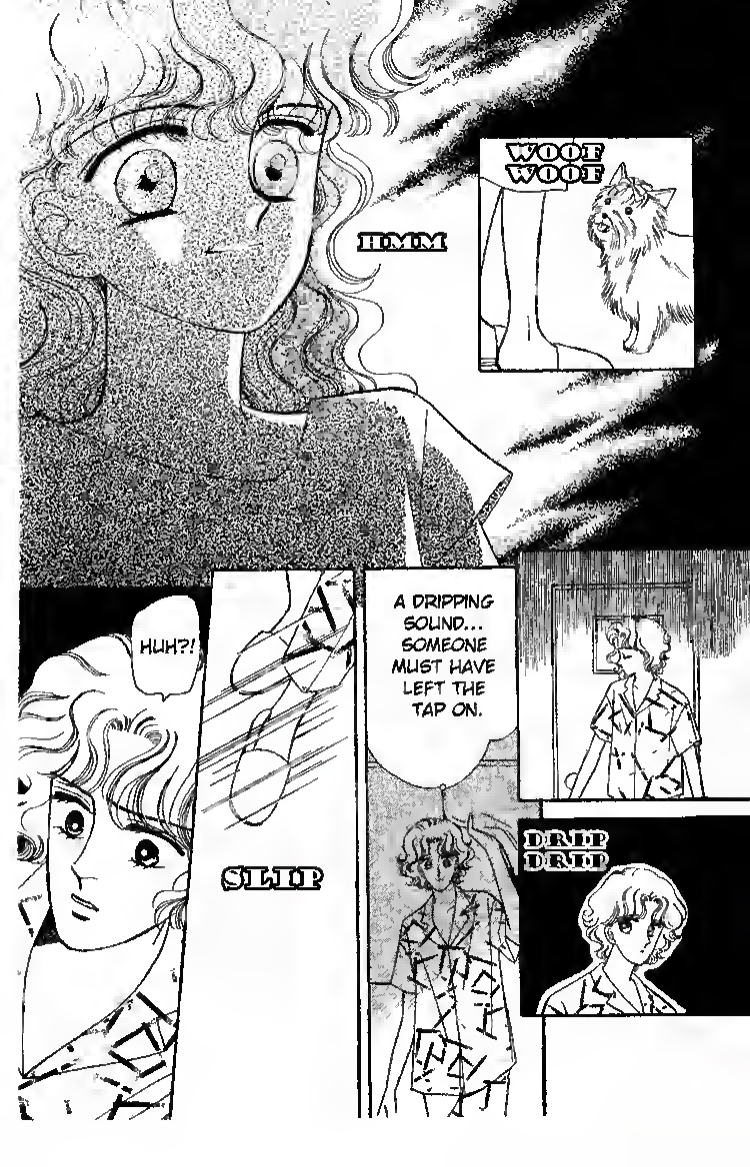

I HATE CLEANING THIS PLACE.
PLUS IT'S A LITTLE CREEPY...
IT'S DUSTY AND IT SMELLS WEIRD...
DITTO.
OH RIGHT, THEY SAY THAT SOMEONE'S SEEN A GHOST IN THIS ROOM.
HUH?!
IIT'S THE SPIRIT OF A SKINNY GUY COVERED IN BLOOD.
CHIKA, DON'T SAY SOMETHING LIKE THAT HERE!
LOOK, IT'S BEHIND YOU, NARUMI!
AAAAAH!
EH?!

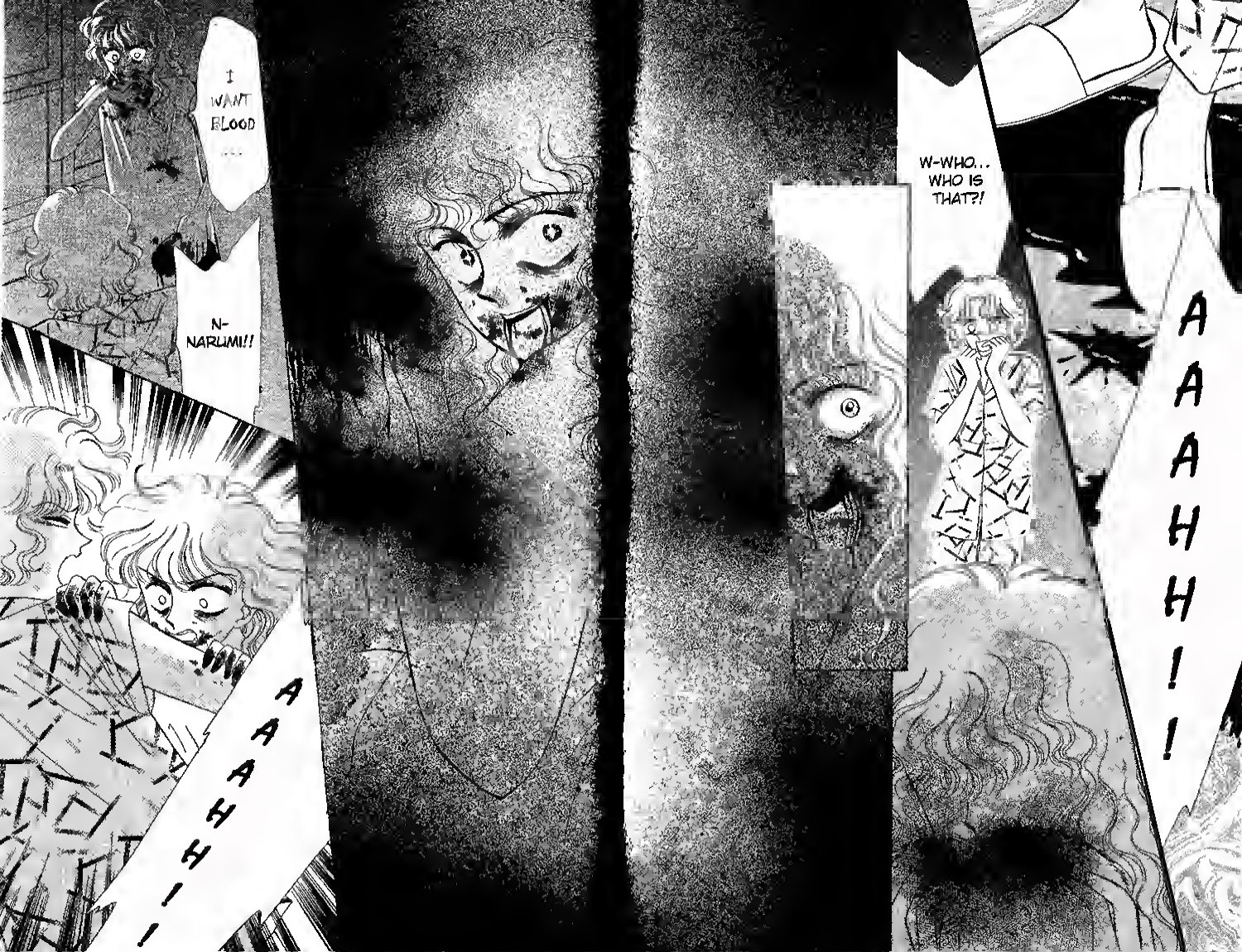
CRASH
BUMP!
OUCH!
NA... NARUMI! ARE YOU ALRIGHT?
WHAT A BEAUTIFUL STONE.
IT HAS SUCH A DEEP RED COLOR...
HA HA HA
D-DON'T WORRY... I'M ALRIGHT ...
TWITCH!
NARUMI?

SENSEI WILL SCOLD ME FOR THIS, BUT I DON'T CARE...
THE MORE I LOOK AT IT, THE MORE BEAUTIFUL IT SEEMS...
RUSTLE
SEE YOU LATER.
SURPRISED
THAT'S A BEAUTIFUL STONE YOU HAVE THERE!
IS THAT YOURS?
Y-YES ...
WHO'S SHE?
HMM... BUT I FEEL LIKE I'VE SEEN IT HERE AT SCHOOL BEFORE...
WHAT DID YOU SAY?! THIS IS MINE!

MINE!
SNUB
THIS IS MY STONE...
HO ...
... BLOOD ...
MUM BLING

I
...
WANT
...
...
BLOOD
...
OPEN
WOOF
WALKING


WOOF WOOF
HMM
A DRIPPING SOUND... SOMEONE MUST HAVE LEFT THE TAP ON.
DRIP DRIP
HUH?!
SLIP


I WANT BLOOD ...
N-NARUMI!!
AAAAHH!!
W-WHO... WHO IS THAT?!
AAAHH!!

HUFF
HUFF
HUFF
WHEN NARUMI'S FAMILY SAW HER CHANGED LIKE THAT
THEY HAD TO RESTRAIN HER TO STOP HER HURTING ANYONE.
BUT ...
PANT
AFTER SHE STOPPED DRINKING BLOOD, SHE GREW WEAKER.

GOOD DAY, AUNTIE. HOW'S NARUMI DOING?
AH, CHIKA, THANK YOU FOR COMING ...
... BUT RIGHT NOW, NARUMI IS SLEEPING.
I'LL JUST PUT THIS IN HER ROOM THEN, IF YOU DON'T MIND.
IS THAT SO?...
YES, OF COURSE YOU CAN.
OH MY, NARUMI IS SO SKINNY...
I'M WORRIED ...
OPEN
PEEK

4 DAYS LATER
6-3
NARUMI! YOU'VE RECOVERED NOW?
YES, I'M FINE NOW...
WHAT WAS YOUR ILLNESS?
IT WAS THE FLU..
A BAD CASE....
OH, I DON'T SEE CHIKA. WHERE IS SHE?
CHIKA'S BEEN SICK FOR THE PAST 4 DAYS.
IF I REMEMBER RIGHT, SHE BECAME SICK THE DAY AFTER VISITING YOU.
THAT'S RIGHT... I GOT BETTER AFTER CHIKA VISITED ME.
AND THAT STONE HAS ALSO GONE FROM MY ROOM...
COULD IT BE...?

HEELP!
NOOOO! CHIKA, STOP IT!
OPEN
CHIKA?!
CHI ... CHIKA ...
AUNTIE, WHAT HAPPENED?!
... BLOOD ...

HEART THUMP
I WANT BLOOD ...
WHEN THEY SEARCHED CHIKA'S ROOM
THEY FOUND THAT RED STONE.

IT TURNED OUT THAT THERE WAS AN EVIL SPIRIT INSIDE THE STONE.
NARUMI SUSPECTED THAT THERE WAS SOMETHING WRONG WITH THE STONE, AND TOOK IT TO THE NEARBY TEMPLE.
FOR EXAMPLE, OBJECTS IN A SCHOOL LIKE...
IT'S NOT JUST THAT STONE, THERE ARE MANY OBJECTS THAT HAVE SOMETHING INSIDE THEM.
AND ALSO ...
*STATUES ...
A PIANO IN A MUSIC ROOM...
A SKELETON AND SPECIMENS IN A BIOLOGY LAB...
*THIS IS A STATUE OF NINOMIYA SONTOKU, GOOGLE IT, HE IS AN AWESOME MAN, REALLY.

GOT IT?
IN PAINTINGS ...
AND BECAUSE OF THAT...
SCHOOL IS A VERY LIVELY PLACE~

A YOUNG GIRL IS AT PLAY UNDER THE PEAR TREE IN HER YARD ONE EVENING TOWARD DUSK, AND IN THE NEXT INSTANT SHE IS GONE, VANISHED. THIRTY YEARS LATER THE OCCUPANTS OF HER OLD FAMILY HOME ARE SURPRISED BY A VISITOR WHOM THEY RECOGNIZE AT ONCE AS THIS CHILD, NOW GROWN TO WOMANHOOD. SHE LOOKS HAGGARD AND OLD. SHE IS SILENT, EXCEPT FOR THE HALF-APOLOGETIC REMARK THAT SHE 'JUST WANTED TO SEE EVERYONE ONCE MORE,' AND THEN SHE DEPARTS AS SILENTLY AND MYSTERIOUSLY AS SHE CAME. EVIDENTLY NO ONE ATTEMPTS TO FOLLOW HER, AND NO ONE ASKS HER TO STAY. HER STORY REMAINS UNTOLD. NO ONE WANTS TO HEAR IT. THEY KNOW WHAT IT IS. SHE IS ***KAMIKAKUSHI*** ... LITERALLY, SHE HAS BEEN HIDDEN BY THE KAMI, BY THE SPIRITS. SHE HAS BEEN ENSLAVED BY SOME SUPERNATURAL BEING.

(YANGITA, KUNIO. THE LEGENDS OF TONO. TRANSLATED WITH AN INTRODUCTION BY RONALD A. MORSE. TOKYO: JAPAN FOUNDATION, 1975.)

WELL, THE STORY ABOVE IS FROM TONO MONOGATARI, AND IF YOU LIKE JAPANESE FOLKLORE LIKE ME, THEN I SUGGEST YOU TO READ IT.

ANYWAY, THANK YOU FOR READING MAKI NO GAKKYUU NISSHI!
CREDIT THIS TIME :

PROOF-READER AND QUALITY CHECKER : J

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